

EXTENSILE EXPOSURE. By Arnold K. Henry, M.B.(Dubl.), M.Ch.(Hon.), T.C.D. in Cairo, F.R.C.S.I. Second Edition. (Pp. xii + 320; figs. 198. 45s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1957.

It is always stimulating, and sometimes very enlightening, to look at an old subject in a new way; and when a person has the gift of making others do so he is indeed a teacher. Professor Henry has this gift, to which is added a command over our language, and an evident love of it which almost defeats its own ends.

There is a great temptation when reading this book to appreciate the English of each phrase and to enjoy the little "nicknames" given so abundantly to nerve-muscle-artery relationships, and to miss the real kernel which is the wealth of accurate observation.

The method used in reviewing the book was to take it to the anatomy department, and, ignoring the beauty of the English composition, to carry out many of the dissections as described in its pages. As these dissections unfolded it became more and more evident that the book is a great one and by a great teacher who might prove, even to an anatomist, that so-called "gross" anatomy is not finished.

Each dissection contains some tricks; each trick works like a charm, and the book succeeds completely in its professed purpose, which is to show us how to make incisions and dissections which will give us adequate exposure of those parts of the body on which we need to work. For this reason it can be recommended to all general surgeons as well as to orthopaedic surgeons, who have always appreciated the first edition. It should be an excellent book for revision purposes for those who are working for examinations in anatomy, particularly the "primary" F.R.C.S.

The first edition was called "Extensile Exposure applied to Limb Surgery." This new (second) edition adds the neck, parts of the chest and the pelvis. The new areas are spotlighted in the same original manner. When some of the exposures are carried to their limits they are very extensive. They start in the correct position to be made extensive as required by dividing certain unimportant structures. This does not mean that they start extensive—merely extensile. The author states that he would like to think this unnecessary advice, but it is really very necessary, as one sometimes sees enormous incisions where a smaller one would do quite well.

The whole spirit of the book may be summed up in the statement that there are enough difficulties in surgery without adding inadequate—or overadequate—exposure. s. v.

SURGEON'S JOURNAL. The Autobiography of J. Johnston Abraham. (Pp. viii + 441. 25s.) London: Heinemann, 1957.

DR. ABRAHAM was born in Coleraine in 1876, and this is a fascinating record of a full and interesting life. The author, well known for an early book, "The Surgeon's Log," and perhaps to some better known under the pseudonym of James Harpole, is an accomplished and experienced writer. He vividly recreates his early life around Coleraine and his student days at Trinity. At Trinity the medical course allowed him time to study English literature under Dowden, and he hesitated between medicine and becoming a writer.

London before World War 1, war service in Serbia and in Egypt, the Sinai Desert and Palestine, where he showed great skill as an administrator and rose to the rank of colonel, and the years of settling down and building up a consultant practice in London are described with a fine appreciation of how to tell a story. His account is never tedious and many dramatic incidents are skillfully recounted, and many charming anecdotes of the great figures of his time and of ordinary folk are cleverly interspersed.

Many will find the final third of the book is of great interest. It covers the thirties and life during World War 2, and is well garnished with many stories of great contemporary figures, but it lacks something of the incident and continuity of the earlier chapters.

Few medical autobiographies or biographies can match this work for interest to those outside the profession, and both doctors and their patients will find it of absorbing interest.

J. E. M.